

THE ORGANIZER

April 18, 2011

IN THIS ISSUE:

Anti-Union Bills

A look at legislative attacks on workers' rights across the U.S.
Page 3 -4

Editorial

Why we haven't lost the fight for General Strike
Page 2

Member's Corner

Dues: what they are and why we pay them
Page 4

May Day

International Worker's day, past and present
Page 5-6

Jimmy John's Workers Union

Get the full scoop on the organizing campaign
Page 6-7

Twin Cities Work People's College

Bringing an old IWW education tool to a new office
Page 8



Service workers need paid sick days: a look at the numbers at Jimmy John's

FW Nathan Hawthorne

Jimmy John's workers are demanding paid sick days and an end to retaliation against people who take unpaid sick days and who have raised these demands. The idea of a sick person making sandwiches for customers does more than spoil appetites: it's downright gross. Paid sick days for food service employees ought to be a no-brainer.

Unfortunately we live in an economy that is more or less brainless, or heartless at least, so the food industry is used to not providing sick days. MikLin Enterprises, the owners of Jimmy John's in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park, can easily afford to

pay their employees for sick days.

The Mulligans just opened up a new store, which means they must be bringing in increasing profits. They expect to increase revenue at that location, or they wouldn't have opened it. After all, why would they buy more stores if they weren't making money at the ones they already operate?

According to the franchisee manual that Jimmy John's Corporate releases, Jimmy John's franchises average \$677,000 in sales per store per year, with profit margins of 18-25%. The Mulligans currently own ten stores. That means even if they're performing on the low end of

average, they should take in almost seven million dollars in profit. Mike Mulligan's million dollar home and multiple fancy cars make it appear that he's doing fine.

We also know from the U.S. Department of Labor that the Mulligans paid at least \$85,000 last fall to union-busting company Labor Relations Institute, Inc. (LRI). They had other unaccounted-for attorney fees on top of that as well – anti-union lawyers don't come cheap. So we know the Mulligans have money for the things they think are important, like violating workers' rights.



Reflections on Madison the fight for general strike is far from over

FW Sara Larson

This February labor was dealt a symbolic blow in our neighboring state of Wisconsin. While the law has certainly never been created in the interest of workplace organizing, the Budget Repair Bill introduced by Governor Scott Walker treaded so violently on workers' rights that the general public was stirred to direct action.

Wisconsinites along with "outside agitators" took to the capitol building for a long standing occupation. The IWW's involvement in the struggle was more than marginal; we planted the seed for general strike. Through education and conversation, the IWW urged workers to take matters into their own hands by disrupting the flow of labor in an economy that thrives on consumption. When workers stop delivering the goods, be they private or public sector, the impact is undeniable. Society cannot function without the labor we provide and that is the power behind general strike.

This mass work stoppage has obviously not happened, yet. After FWs spent hours, days, weeks writing and translating calls for general strike it remained in essence rhetoric. "General Strike!"

posters featuring Eric Drooker's wildcat illustration are now recognizable internationally and in multiple languages, but our day for GS is still to come.

Our hard-working FWs are not to blame for the eventual slump of direct action in Madison. Fear of legal retaliation and a general lack of knowledge on the general strike front left our effort abandoned by a larger apathetic populace.

After visiting the occupied state capitol and rallying with public and private sector workers, union and non-unionized from across the country, I left Madison with my faith in the IWW reinforced. Our strength is in our method: conversations with real people about their real issues in their workplaces. We haven't called for recall or any other political recourse in Wisconsin because our goals are not political. Workers are impacted by conditions, not inaccessible rhetoric set forth by parties.

Despite the fact that we did not accomplish a general strike, this was practice, a trial run in advance of the real thing. What we've learned from Wisconsin is that there is a working class consciousness. We just need to tap further into it and do what we Wobs do best: agitate, this time towards working class solidarity and eventually when we have a strong, noticeable presence, general strike!

SICK DAYS continued...

What would it cost to provide paid sick days? Let's say everyone got five paid sick days a year, and let's say a paid sick day means eight paid hours. The Mulligans pay literally poverty wages. Most employees are making eight dollars an hour or less. That means a paid sick day would cost about \$64 apiece.

By simple arithmetic, if each worker got five of them, that would be \$320 per person. We know the Mulligans currently employ about 200 people at Jimmy Johns in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park. To provide each of them with five paid sick days would cost \$64,000 a year.

That sounds like a lot of money, but in context it's not. Not when MikLin Enterprises is making nearly seven million dollars a year in sales. Not when they're making over a million dollar a year in profits. Not when they spent over \$85,000 attacking the union. For what they gave to LRI, they could have already provided everyone with sick days and saved twenty grand!

How would sick days actually work though? Who would work? That ought to be something the Mulligans figure out, since they're the big-shot managers and owners whose responsibility it ought to be, but since they refuse to even consider the issue here are some ideas.

Let's say every day four people are on call, meaning if someone calls in sick they will come in to work. Let's say they get paid ten bucks for being on call. That's \$40 a day. That's \$14,600 a year. That bumps the total cost of

sick days up to \$78,600 a year, STILL less than the Mulligans paid LRI!

Let's make it even better for the workers. Let's say there's a bonus if you come in for someone while they're sick: you get an extra dollar an hour while covering for a sick co-worker. That provides a reward for workers helping out sick fellow employees and further guarantees customers get their food prepared only by healthy people.

If everyone got five days a year, and each sick day was equal to eight hours pay, and there are about 200 employees, that means we're talking 8,000 hours. Paying an extra one dollar for those hours would cost about \$8,000 a year.

The Mulligans can afford to provide sick days. If they did so business would still be profitable. Actually, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says that providing sick days actually results in savings, because forcing workers to work sick results in lost productivity. Of course, the Mulligans have no way of knowing this – never having provided the service.

The Mulligans could provide everyone with five paid sick days, have four people every day on a paid on-call position in case someone got sick, and they could pay an extra dollar an hour for people who cover for sick coworkers. That would cost about \$86,600 a year. Last fall the Mulligans spent over \$85,000 fighting against Jimmy John's worker exercising their rights. The Mulligans can afford to do the right thing for customers and workers.

They choose not to.

An Attack of Workers' Collective Rights

Anti-Union Bills Across the United States

FW Aaron Kocher

The media has focused a lot of attention recently on anti-union bills cropping up in states across the nation. The Wisconsin legislature recently rammed through a new law that is now being challenged in the courts over procedural violations. If allowed to stand, the law will eliminate any meaningful collective bargaining rights for most public workers.

The Ohio legislature recently passed an even more draconian law. The law goes a step further than the similar Wisconsin legislation. In addition to limiting state workers' collective bargaining, the law allows employers to impose an extension of former contracts after unilaterally deciding negotiations with workers have been unproductive.

Michigan recently passed a law that transfers totalitarian power to the state government in the event of a "financial emergency." The law allows the state to suspend the right of the people to be represented by their elected municipal and school-district officials through the ability to impose unelected "emergency managers" who have full reign to

unilaterally terminate public sector union contracts.

Meanwhile in Indiana a so-called "right-to-work" bill would outlaw closed shop unions for private sector workers. The proposed bill discourages employers' pursuit of unions by threat of a misdemeanor for any employer who requires a worker to become or remain a member of a labor organization.

Emboldened by recent gains in Wisconsin, Ohio and Michigan the far right is pursuing a slew of anti-union legislation in virtually every state. A search for various types of anti-worker bills on the National Conference of State Legislatures website, which tracks proposed legislation in the U.S., yields hundreds of results. While some of these bills individually are mere symbolic gestures of legislators who know they will not pass, as a whole the barrage of legislation intended to take away workers' hard-earned rights is nothing less than an assault on the working class by big business interests and the far right.

Types of Bills Being Considered

With so many anti-union bills being considered across the country, it is impossible to list them all, but most fall into a few categories:

Right-to-Work: This type of law seeks to undermine the principle of majority-rule democracy in the workplace by allowing individuals to opt-out of joining a union and paying dues or other fees, even after a majority decision by co-workers to organize and collectively bargain as a union. The workers who form the union are still required by law to defend their free-riding co-workers, and grant them most of the same rights as union members who pay their full share. In some cases, non-members are still required to pay "agency fees" that are less than full membership dues, but many of the bills under consideration allow free-riders to opt-out of any fees, while still enjoying union representation. Right-to-work laws are being considered in at least twenty-two states as well as Puerto Rico.

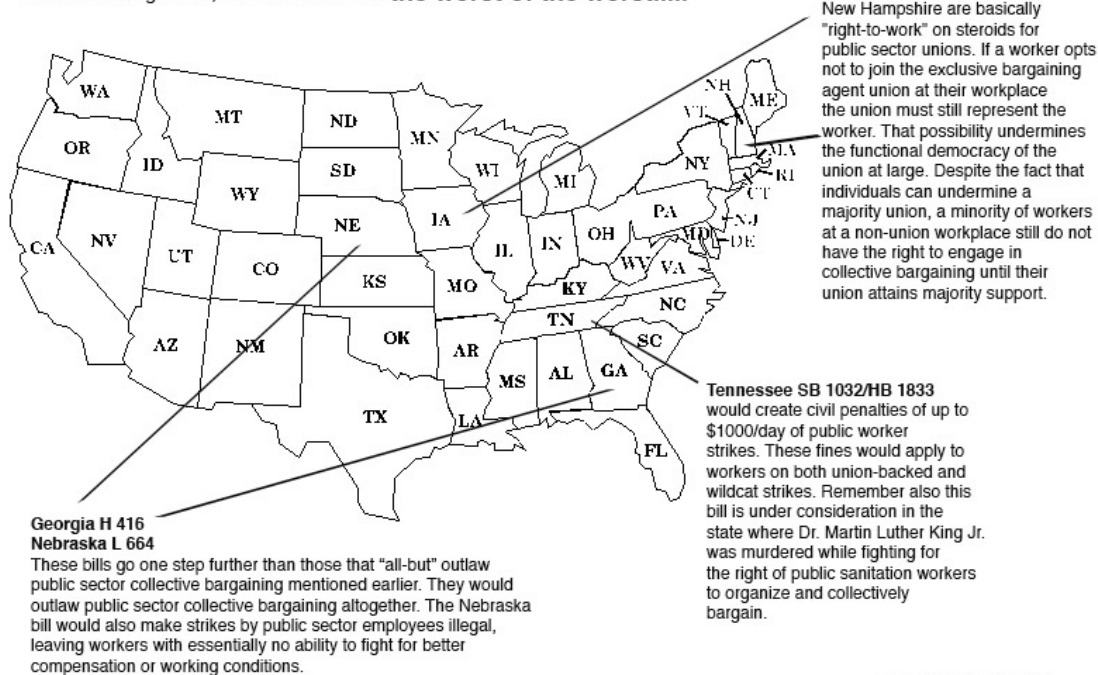
Dues Collection: Most unions use what is called "dues check-off" to automatically collect dues from their members' paychecks, and usually build this into their contracts. Bills in

various states could prohibit dues check-off for both private and public sector workers in different instances. The IWW constitution actually already prohibits mandates for dues check-off in shop contracts. This is intended to promote democracy in the One Big Union by requiring shop delegates to maintain contact with all of the union members often enough to collect dues. In other unions, dues check-off may also remove the incentive for union officers to oppose strikes since dues will continue streaming in through check-off. Most of the bill under consideration goes much farther than prohibiting dues check-off in contracts.

Some laws would actually prohibit employers from allowing employees to pay

The Worst Offenders

Out of the hundreds of bills under consideration attacking unions and works in general, a few stand out as **the worst of the worst.....**



Info by Aaron Kocher
Graphics by Bri Hennessy

Anti-Union Bills Continued...

dues through paychecks at all, even if workers voluntarily did so, as some Wobblies do.

Restrictions would not exist for other organizations, such as United Way, to receive payment automatically through an employee's paycheck. Bills that would restrict or outlaw dues check-off are being considered in at least twenty-two states and Puerto Rico.

Public Sector Unions:

Legislation has been proposed in almost every state attacking the right of public employees to organize and collectively bargain. The new law in Michigan is one of the most extreme examples; it allows the capacity to destroy public sector unions through outright fascist measures.

Most of the bills closely resemble those in Wisconsin and Ohio, taking away the right of workers to engage in comprehensive bargaining by limiting the right to bargain to only a few issues. These laws seem to all-but outlaw public sector collective bargaining while still maintaining a democratic appearance through the existence of bastardized versions of bargaining.

Another common type of bill would eliminate the right of public sector workers to strike, or expand the group of public sector workers who aren't protected on strike, most often to include educators. A close-to-home example of this is a bill making its way through the Minnesota legislature that would outlaw teacher strikes. Legislators across the United States have come up with almost every way, shape and form imaginable to attack the ability of public sector workers to effectively organize.

This state-by-state attack nationwide on workers' rights to organize and collectively bargain makes one thing clearer than ever: an injury to one is an injury to all.

Members' Corner Dues Money

FW John O'Reilly

Like many other organizations, our union takes in dues money to fund its activities. But what does our dues money get used for and who decides where it is used? This month in the Member's Corner, we discuss these issues and talk about why paying dues is useful.

In Article 8 of the IWW Constitution (available online at www.iww.org/PDF/Constitutions/2011IWWConstitution.pdf or on paper from your delegate) the way dues are collected and split up is explained. While a bit confusing at times, it breaks down all the different ways that dues can be paid, collected and split up based on the different types of local organizations. In the Twin Cities, we have a General Membership Branch (or GMB), which means our branch is made up of all the IWW members in the area, regardless of which industry they work in. The Branch Treasurer of our GMB keeps half of our dues money and sends the other half to IWW General Headquarters in Chicago.

While that percentage may seem high, the amount of our dues sent to Headquarters serves an important purpose. "Dues that come to GHQ go to maintain the basics of the organization," say Joe Tessone, General Secretary-Treasurer of the IWW. "We use that money to file forms with the government, to print and publish new member materials, and maintain membership database."

Dues money that goes to headquarters also pays for FW Tessone and Headquarters staff to be a resource for our membership: "Dues money allows us to have a general place where people can call and ask questions and maintain an international informational and distribution center for material and information," FW Tessone, a former Starbucks Workers Union organizer, adds.

Democracy and accountability are an important part of dues "per caps," as the money that goes to headquarters is called. FW Tessone says that "reading the Financial Reports in the back of the General Organizing Bulletin is the best place to see exactly where money is coming from and going" at the international level. Members can "check the balances of all our bank

accounts and where money goes for various organizing drives, can see monthly profit and loss, and our budget vs. actual, which shows overall income and expenses for the entire year to date," points out Tessone. Members can play a direct role in deciding how that money gets allocated by participating in our yearly referendum and making informed decisions about who gets elected. He also suggests that members can get involved in international committees like the Budget or Audit Committees, made up of rank-and-file workers. Ask your delegate about how to get involved in these and other international committees.

Then there is the other half of our dues money: the part that we keep here in the Twin Cities. As a democratic organization, the membership of the union gets to decide how to spend our dues money. The first Tuesday of every month, the GMB has a monthly business meeting where all members in good standing can vote to decide how to allocate our dues. Every branch of our union meets to allocate funds in a similar way.

Liberté Locke, a union member in New York City and a Starbucks barista, points out ways that her branch has helped her: "We have often cut checks from our account for workers who have been fired for organizing and we've also had dues money allocated as a donation for legal fees for a worker fighting deportation." FW Locke adds that dues money has allowed her branch to get business cards, fliers, tables, and supplies for protests.

In the Twin Cities, we use our dues money in similar ways. We use our dues share to fund our organizing campaigns, assist our members when the bosses retaliate against them, and pay part of our office rent. In short, dues money is how we pool our resources and organize. Individually, workers do not have much power. But when we come together, we can do great things. Similarly, dues are just a tiny part of our monthly income, but when we use dues collectively we can give crucial financial support to support our organizing and each other. Make sure to get in touch with your delegate each month to pay dues so that we can move the work along.



International Workers' Day

The Past and Present of May Day

FW Sara Larson



As May draws near, our holiday approaches. May 1 is International Workers' Day, time for wage slaves to commemorate the historic struggles of unions and laborers worldwide and a day to celebrate our victories both past and present. In recent years, cities across the U.S. have begun to redirect May 1 celebrations to their radical roots through immigrant right marches and other demonstrations.

This year the Twin Cities IWW will bring our celebration and story to a highly visible, community oriented gathering: the Heart of the Beast Theatre's May Day parade.

Since 1975 neighbors from in and around south Minneapolis's Powderhorn neighborhood have gathered as a community to celebrate free speech and the end of Minnesota winter. In years past the celebration has openly and playfully critiqued corporate and state greed, but never involved a section as directly labor-oriented as the IWW.

The Twin Cities GMB will be highly visible, taking part in a sanctioned section rather than the less official "Free Speech" portion at the parade's end. This is an opportunity to grow the influence of the IWW in the Twin Cities through community outreach and visibility while taking part in a Minneapolis tradition.

There's a rich history behind both International Workers' Day and the Heart of the Beast's May Day festival.

A Brief History of International Workers' Day

May 1 was first recognized as International Workers' Day in honor of immigrant workers who fought successfully for the eight-hour workday in the United States in the 1880s. While celebrated worldwide on May 1, International Workers' Day is not recognized as an official holiday in the United States, Canada or South Africa.

In fact, media, politicians and mainstream business leaders often belittle the significance of May Day by labeling it a "communist" holiday, outdated and suitable to Soviet Russia. This lack of official endorsement is partially due to the holiday's history of direct action and advancement of workers' rights. Its radical history can be intimidating to bureaucracy.

The date is historically significant. On May 1, 1884 the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions called two years in advance for a general strike of all workers in order to move forward the resolution that after May 1, 1886 an eight hour day would legally constitute a full day's work in the United States. Fed up with inhumanely long workdays, about 250,000 workers nationwide had joined the May Day movement by April 1886.

Organizing efforts were centered in Chicago where the anarchist

International Working People's Association was highly active. Similar to the IWW, they believed a truly free society could be brought about only by the abolition of capitalism. They used their resources to organize primarily immigrant communities. By May 1, 1886 strikers and unions in Chicago had already won multiple gains for laborers in the city and seemed poised to garner further victories for workers' rights.

But violence erupted in Chicago on May 3, 1886 when police fired into a crowd of strikers outside the McCormick Reaper Works Factory. Four were killed and more injured. In response, a mass meeting in Haymarket Square was called for the following day to publicize and protest the previous day's incident of police brutality.

The following day a crowd of approximately 2,000 gathered to peacefully discuss the eight-hour workday and how to respond to the Chicago police's attack on workers' right to voice their grievances. Speakers shared their thoughts on a platform without incident.

The gathering was peaceful, until against governor's orders a police official called in 180 officers to break up the already dwindling meeting. At some point a pipe bomb was thrown, killing seven police and injuring over 60 other individuals. The police responded by opening fire to the crowd, killing four.

May Day continued...

Immediately following the Haymarket Affair, hundreds of workers were detained and some forced to give false testimony in response to beatings and intense interrogation. In the end, seven of the eight speakers put on trial were convicted of conspiracy to commit murder. Four were hung in November 1887 while another committed suicide and three were later pardoned.

Shortly after his sentencing August Spies, one of the convicted, responded to the court, "If you think that by hanging us you can stamp out the labor movement... the movement from which the downtrodden millions, the millions who toil in misery and want, expect salvation — if this is your opinion, then hang us! Here you will tread on a spark, but there and there, behind you and in front of you, and everywhere, flames blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out."

We continue to commemorate the Haymarket Affair martyrs along with other modern-day labor struggles on International Workers' Day. In recent years the emphasis on "international" workers has grown.

In 2006, "El Gran Paro Americano" headed off a new wave of annual marches and protests in solidarity with immigrant workers. El Gran Paro called for a boycott of all immigrant labor and trade, demonstrating the degree to which this often anti-immigrant society depends on foreign workers.

In recent years, the Twin Cities GMB has participated alongside MIRAC (Minnesota Immigrants Right Action Committee) in annual immigrant and worker's rights marches on International Workers' Day. This year we endorse their March on May 1 at the capital in St. Paul, but we will not have a formal presence. Instead we are focusing energy on HotB's south Minneapolis celebration.

May Day in Minneapolis

For 37 years now, south Minneapolis's Heart of the Beast Theatre has held its annual May Day parade and festival marching down Bloomington Avenue on the first Sunday of May. Coincidentally this year, it falls on May 1.

The celebration stems from a relatively small 1975 gathering of Powderhorn neighbors. According to Heart of the Beast, the first Annual May Day Parade

included just a "group of 50 or 60 people, an Earth puppet, a Water puppet, several birds, two accordions, and many banners." The event was hosted to honor springtime as well as celebrate the then-recent end of the Vietnam War.

Today, the celebration has expanded dramatically. Parade planning begins as early as February and involves hundreds to thousands of community members' input, creativity and volunteer work. Parade participant numbers are estimated at about 2,000 with crowds of onlookers in the tens of thousands. The march is split into four or five sections related to an overarching theme. This year it's "Caws to Unite," with a variety of birdlike elements interwoven in the parade. The procession always ends with a free speech section where audience members are invited to join in the march.

This year the Twin Cities branch has a spot reserved in the last group, "Caws for Alarm," prior to the free speech section. Accompanied by decorative crows and a message that "We are still at war," union members and allies are encouraged to march wearing our colors — black and red — behind the IWW banner to celebrate every workers' holiday this May 1.

JJWU Campaign Update

Six workers fired in retaliation against paid sick day fight

FW Erik Forman

Anyone who has worked in a restaurant or cafe knows that the sandwiches, burgers, pizzas, and beverages served from capitalist kitchens often have a few secret ingredients: cold and flu germs of workers who aren't allowed sick days. Jimmy John's is among the worst offenders in the industry. At Jimmy John's, we are forced to get our own shifts covered if we need to take a day off when sick. Otherwise, we get written up or fired. Also, most of us make so little money that we can't afford to take a day off. Because of these two factors, stories abound of workers who were fired or disciplined after missing work because they had strep throat or the flu, or who came in to make sandwiches because they had no other choice.

Thanks to the IWW Jimmy John's Workers Union, all that is about to change.

As flu season hit its peak this winter, we decided the time was right to push forward with our demand for paid sick days. We began our campaign by talking to our coworkers. We decided to conduct a survey to find out exactly how often people work sick at Jimmy John's, and why. After dozens of shopfloor conversations and hours of phonebanking, it was clear to us that paid sick days are desperately needed. Out of a 40-person sample, 79.4% reported being forced to work while sick an average 4.1 days per year. With 200 workers in





JJWU continued...

the franchise, that means that on average two Jimmy John's workers work sick daily. 40% because management won't let them call in when they can't find a replacement, 30% because they can't afford to take a day off, and another 30% for a combination of these reasons.

Armed with these results, we decided to give management an opportunity to do the right thing and save us the trouble of fighting them. One of our members called Rob Mulligan and asked him to meet to discuss providing paid sick days and reforming the sick leave policy. Predictably, he refused, leaving us no choice but to begin turning up the heat.

Little by little, we brought the issue into the public eye. Workers donned Mr. Yuck-"Sick of Working Sick" buttons at work, leaving customers to wonder exactly what contagions their sandwich-maker was sick of working with. We stepped up the level of direct pressure on Rob Mulligan, with workers actively confronting him in shop about the sick day issue on an almost daily basis. Still, Rob stonewalled us.

On March 10th, we ratcheted up the pressure another notch. A delegation of four workers confronted Rob in the franchise office to once again lay out why paid sick days would benefit workers, customers, and management. Rob seemed to acknowledge that there was a problem with Jimmy John's sick day policy, but didn't make any promises to change things. We left him with an ultimatum- begin reforming the sick day policy, or we would bring management's disregard for public health into the public

eye with thousands of posters distributed throughout the Twin Cities.

Even with the specter of public outrage on the horizon, management failed to respond. The next day, Mike Mulligan had a letter posted in all the stores once again accusing the IWW of attempting to destroy Jimmy John's. Interestingly, he admitted that they do discipline workers for calling in sick. It was clear that management's position had hardened with the intervention of the Reaganesque Mike Mulligan senior.

With no response from management, on March 20th workers posted 3000 copies of the sick day poster throughout the city. The poster featured two identical photos of a Jimmy John's sandwich, with the text "THIS SANDWICH WAS MADE BY A 'HEALTHY' JIMMY JOHN'S WORKER. THIS SANDWICH WAS MADE BY A 'SICK' JIMMY JOHN'S WORKER. CAN YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE? THAT'S TOO BAD, BECAUSE JIMMY JOHN'S WORKERS DON'T GET SICK DAYS. SHOOT... WE CAN'T EVEN CALL IN SICK. I HOPE YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM IS HEALTHY BECAUSE YOU'RE ABOUT TO TAKE THE SANDWICH TEST. HELP JIMMY JOHN'S WORKERS WIN SICK DAYS! CALL ROB MULLIGAN AT 612-817-9016"

Management was outraged. Apparently, they still haven't learned that we don't make idle threats. After sending managers and bossed workers around the city (off the clock, presumably) to take down the posters, the Mulligans fired six union members in retaliation for the posters. They based the firings on a long-shot legal argument that the posters were 'defamatory.'

We took the firings in stride and pushed back hard. Hundreds of union supporters flooded Jimmy John's Facebook page with thousands of posts expressing outrage over the company's sick day policies and the firings. On Friday March 25, hundreds of supporters called in to the Skyway store to complain, clogging the store's phone lines. Later that afternoon, the six fired workers and a group of union supporters confronted Rob Mulligan face to face at his Block E office. Rob couldn't handle being asked to own up to his actions and called security.

After an intense back-and-forth, we left. On the sidewalk outside we met a police officer who was responding to the call. He asked us what was going on, and when informed he responded, "Everyone needs sick days!" and went in to talk with Rob Mulligan.

The nightmare for the Mulligans continued the next week with a lively picket that choked the Riverside lunch rush to a trickle. We were joined on the picket line by members of the Minnesota Nurses Association, SEIU Healthcare, AFSCME 3800, and other unions.

If the Mulligans didn't like our poster, then they must hate the news coverage we have gotten so far. Because of coverage from Reuters, the St. Paul Pioneer Press, CityPages, the Minnesota Daily, Twin Cities Business, and scores of other media outlets and blogs, millions of people have now seen the infamous sick day poster. Rather than silence us, the firings have only made our voices louder.

The week after, the Mulligans finally began to crack. They issued an updated 'Time and Attendance' policy which allows workers to call in five times a year without being fired. Previously, workers were fired on the spot for not working when they were sick. The change isn't perfect, but it's a huge step in the right direction. We will continue to push for the right to call in sick without being disciplined.

We are also fighting hard for reinstatement of the wrongly fired workers. We filed a charge with the NLRB over our firings. Our amazing lawyer, Tim Louris at Miller O'Brien Cummins, has discovered that almost all the case law on 'defamation' supports our action. The NLRB has referred our charge to their Division of Advice in Washington, DC. We are cautiously optimistic that we will eventually be reinstated.

In the mean time, the struggle for paid sick days, decent wages, and basic dignity and respect continues at Jimmy John's. We have won some hard-fought victories, and we have taken a couple hits, but I am confident that a year from now, this will only be one bump along the road to victory.

THE ORGANIZER

A quarterly publication of the Twin Cities General Membership Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World.

The IWW is a union for all workers, dedicated to organizing on the job for better conditions today, and a world without bosses tomorrow.

You are invited to contact the Branch Secretary-Treasurer or any Delegate listed below for no-pressure conversations about your issues on the job.

Contact

Phone. 612.378.8845

Email. twincities@iww.org

Address

79 13th Ave Northeast Suite 103A
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413

Join

If you have any questions, or would like to join, please go to the [join](#) page.

Branch Secretary-Treasurers

Joel Schwartz

jrschwartz53@comcast.net

Joe Selinski

joeselinski@gmail.com

Editor

Sara Larson

Policy

Stories, letters to the editors, and belly-aching can be addressed to tc-organizer@riseup.net

Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed are not necessarily the official position of the local branch or the union as a whole.

Many of our members are engaged in active organizing campaigns, and some use an alias, occasionally their union card number, or 'x' number. We prefer transparency over secrecy whenever possible, but will always honor requests for anonymity.

IWW Work People's College Event a Success

A day of education and discussion

FW John O'Reilly

On Saturday April 16, IWW members and friends enjoyed a day of free educational talks in the new union office in South Minneapolis. The event was organized by the Work People's College, a committee of the IWW branch, and promoted ideas and conversations about different important themes that working people are facing today. Over 60 people attended the talks through the course of the day, and many members took away important lessons and invaluable conversations.

Class topics included an update and discussion about the current struggles faced by pro-democracy movements in the Middle East and Northern Africa, a panel featuring organizers working in the low-wage sector and a talk about the importance of the strike as a tactic for workers. Members of the Madison IWW branch came to help lead reflections about the movement for a general strike in

Wisconsin and where the situation stands today.

Throughout the day, Wobblies talked and showed a characteristic dedication to educating one another and ourselves.

Event organizer Kieran Knutson said that the purpose of the event was to reactivate the educational arm of the Twin Cities IWW and to try out the format of an all day program. Participants listened to talks and panels but audience participation and discussion was a key part of the event's success.

"The most exciting part of the day was the opportunity to hear fellow workers' thoughts on broad issues and analysis that we don't often get the time to talk out in business meetings," added FW Knutson.

The Work People's College Committee also comes out of an older IWW educational body. The name comes from a labor school that the IWW ran in

northern Minnesota for several decades.

"The original Work People's College helped educate and train working class activists and organizers," FW Knutson said, "We are trying to root ourselves in that tradition."

The Work People's College of old, located just outside of Duluth, was a center for worker's education and IWW ideas and tactics and ran off the strength of the Finnish unionist movement of the Iron Range.

Today, the efforts of the Twin Cities Work People's College Committee is centered in the modern-day need for workers to educate ourselves about our movement and our world.

There are plans to evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of the Work People's College day. If post-event considerations are positive enough, plans may be made to host another in upcoming months.



Have you gotten outside yet today? It's a great day out there. No. Unfortunately, we've been tied up the entire day.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Saturday, April 30th:
Education Workers IOC 620
3-5pm, IWW Office
- Saturday, April 30th:
Jimmy Jams! Vol. 3
9-11pm, Sisters Camelot
2310 Snelling Ave S, Mpls
- May Day Events
Sunday, May 1st:
Pre-parade meet-up 10am
May Day Parade & Festival in
Powderhorn Park 12-5pm
May Day Party
7-10pm, IWW Office
- Tuesday, May 3rd:
GMB Meeting
7pm, IWW Office
- Every Thursday:
JJWU Solidarity Committee
7pm, IWW Office